



# News Release

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## **MSHA inspectors cite West Virginia coal mine for dozens of violations** *Violations exposed miners to black lung, explosion hazards*

**ARLINGTON, Va.** – An impact inspection at the Rhino Eastern LLC’s Eagle Mine 3 in Wyoming County, West Virginia, found conditions that put miners at risk of developing black lung disease and that increased the potential for deadly explosions, underscoring the importance of mine safety vigilance and the need for continued improvements in controlling coal dust.

The Mine Safety and Health Administration carried out an impact inspection on June 24 that found 38 violations. Inspectors arrived at the mine at mid-morning, securing the mine’s phone systems on the surface that provide communications to the underground mining section. They traveled to the underground working section, where they arrived undetected. There, they determined that the mine operator failed to follow approved ventilation, methane and dust control plans in several locations of the underground mine.

“The alarming conditions found at Eagle Mine 3 show that common-sense practices to prevent black lung, mine explosions and other hazards were ignored,” said Joseph A. Main, assistant secretary of labor for mine safety and health. “There is absolutely no excuse for allowing such dangerous conditions to exist, and miners deserve better.”

New [respirable dust regulations](#) aimed at ending black lung, which go into effect on Aug. 1, address the shortfall in dust controls that were found at Eagle Mine 3, Main said. “The practices found at this mine highlight why we need these tougher dust standards,” he said.

MSHA inspectors revisited Eagle Mine 3 because it experienced an elevated citation rate in the first quarter of 2014 and logged a high number of violations in a May impact inspection.

Inspectors found critical ventilation controls were not installed while the continuous mining machine was cutting coal, leaving clouds of harmful, thick dust that was clearly visible. Other pieces of mining equipment were found to be operating without ventilation controls and without the required amount of air quantity, which is necessary to carry away flammable, explosive, harmful gases, dust and smoke from the area where coal is being cut, mined, drilled for blasting or loaded. Two roof bolting machines were observed operating without properly installed ventilation line curtains and the correct air quantity. These conditions put miners at risk of developing black lung and increase the potential for a coal mine explosion to occur.

Furthermore, in several locations the operator was not complying with the approved roof control plan. Excessive entry widths exposed miners to the threat of falling rock from the mine roof and ribs.

The 38 citations issued to Eagle Mine 3 included seven [104\(d\)\(2\) closure orders](#) for ventilation violations. Citations also were issued for violations regarding equipment conditions, damaged electrical cables, self-contained self-rescuers and the presence of combustible materials.

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